

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00 EB-07

LAB-04 SIL-01 DOTE-00 FMC-01 SAL-01 CG-00 DLOS-06

OES-06 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 OC-06 CCO-00 /106 W

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O R 160037Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5412

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION GENEVA

USNMR SHAPE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, UK

SUBJECT: SEAMEN'S CRISIS

REF:LONDON 14250

1. SUMMARY: THE POSTPONEMENT FOR 15 DAYS OF A NATIONAL

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SEAMEN'S STRIKE WHICH WAS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN SATURDAY

(SEPTEMBER 11) AT MIDNIGHT HAS AVERTED, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, A DANGEROUS BLOW TO THE SOCIAL CONTRACT. A JOINT TUC-NATIONAL UNION OF SEAMEN WORKING PARTY HAS BEEN SET UP TO DEAL WITH THE CRISIS, AND AFTER MEETING THIS MORNING (SEPTEMBER 13) HAS ARRANGED TO MEET AGAIN ON WEDNESDAY FOR FURTHER TALKS. END SUMMARY.

2. A TUC-NATIONAL UNION OF SEAMEN WORKING PARTY WAS SET UP FOLLOWING TALKS BETWEEN THE TUC AND SEAMEN'S LEADERS AT BRIGHTON FOLLOWING THE CLOSE OF THE TUC CONGRESS ON FRIDAY (SEPTEMBER 10) AND CONTINUING UNTIL 2:30 A.M. ON SATURDAY, NOT MANY HOURS AWAY FROM THE ORIGINAL STRIKE DEADLINE. AS A RESULT OF THESE TALKS, THE NUS AGREED TO POSTPONE THE STRIKE FOR 15 DAYS WHILE THE WORKING PARTY EXAMINES THE POSSIBILITY OF FRINGE BENEFITS FOR SEAMEN WHICH STILL COME WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE PAY GUIDELINES OF THE SOCIAL CONTRACT, 1976-77. THE FIRST MEETING OF THE WORKING PARTY WAS HELD THIS MORNING AT TUC HEADQUARTERS AND ADJOURNED UNTIL WEDNESDAY. A TUC SPOKESMAN SAID THAT LEN MURRAY, TUC GENERAL SECRETARY, WAS REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT THE WORKING PARTY WILL NEED ONLY A FEW MEETINGS TO REACH AGREEMENT.

3. SINCE THE TUC HAS MADE IT CLEAR ALREADY TO THE SEAMEN THAT THEY ARE NOT ENTITLED TO ANY FURTHER PAY INCREMENTS UNTIL THE END OF THE 12-MONTH INTERVAL SINCE THEIR LAST PAY RAISE, THE WORKING PARTY WILL LOOK AT A LIST OF FRINGE BENEFITS WHICH INCLUDE PENSIONS, TRAVEL ALLOWANCES, FALL BACK PAY FOR SEAMEN FOR WHOM THERE IS NO SHIP AVAILABLE AFTER THEY HAVE REPORTED TO OORT, OVERSEAS CURRENCY ALLOWANCES FOR ADDITIONAL AREAS, A TAX ALLOWANCE FOR TIME SPENT ABROAD AND AN INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY SCHEME. THE PAY GUIDELINES CLAUSE WHICH THE WORKING PARTY MUST BE GUIDED BY, HOWEVER, IS VERY CIRCUMSCRIBED. IT STATES: "ALL OTHER IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDING NON-WAGE BENEFITS SHOULD BE KEPT WITHIN THE OVERALL PAY FIGURE EXCEPT AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE CURRENT POLICY; IMPROVEMENTS IN (OR THE INTRODUCTION OF) OCCUPATIONAL PENSIONS SCHEMES UP TO THE CONTRACTING-OUTING LEVEL PROVIDED FOR IN THE SOCIAL SECURITY PENSIONS ACT CAN ALSO BE IMPLEMENTED OUTSIDE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE PAY FIGURE."

4. COMMENT: IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE WORKING PARTY WILL HAVE TO BE VERY INGENIOUS IF IT IS TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN MAINTAINING THE PAY GUIDELINES SINCE IT IS EXAMINING SUCH AN EXTENSIVE LIST OF FRINGE BENEFITS. IF THE GUIDELINES ARE STRETCHED TOO FAR IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE SEAMEN FROM ACTUALLY STRIKING AFTER THE NEW DEADLINE, OTHER UNIONS MAY FEEL IMPELLED TO ASK FOR WHATEVER

BENEFITS ARE GIVEN TO THE SEAMEN. HOWEVER, EVERYONE CONCERNED MUST BE BREATHING A SIGH OF RELIEF THAT THE STRIKE WAS POSTPONED--ESPECIALLY THE LABOR GOVERNMENT.

ARMSTRONG

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